



Kevin Murray
California State Senator

(916) 445-8800

SB 117 (Murray)

Prepaid Return Absentee Envelope

ISSUE:

Most California absentee voters are required to pay postage to return their completed ballot. New printing requirements and the use of optical-scan ballots have made absentee ballots larger and heavier, some requiring up to \$0.83 (eighty-three cents) in postage.

Something as simple as not affixing enough postage can delay or prevent the counting of absentee ballots, potentially disenfranchising voters. Voters should be focused on the candidates and issues that will shape their future, not worrying about how much postage is needed to return their ballot.

SOLUTION:

SB 117 will ensure that all absentee ballots are postage paid and that they are returned to election officials in a timely manner. The goal of absentee voting is to increase voter turnout by giving voters more time to make their decisions and allowing them to vote from the privacy of their own home. A free return envelope is the next logical step to help voters participate in elections.

Six counties – Alpine, Glen, Kern, San Francisco, Sierra, and Tuolumne; and four states – Hawaii, Minnesota, Nevada and West Virginia currently offer prepaid absentee envelopes to voters. Election officials in these counties have noted that the use of prepaid return envelopes has made voting easier for people that utilize absentee voting.

SPONSOR:

Senator Kevin Murray.